

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 28, 2022

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm,

We write to you with concerns regarding President Biden's unprecedented drawdown of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), which has depleted our national security asset to the lowest level since 1984. As Secretary of Energy, you have overseen the largest SPR drawdown in history, selling more than 245 million barrels since President Biden's first day in office. This has occurred as gas prices remain high and supply chain shortages continue to plague our economy. Instead of unleashing American energy production, you have depleted our strategic stockpile while failing to establish long-term plans for the optimal size, configuration, maintenance, and operational capabilities of the reserve.

We are also concerned that the rapid depletion of the SPR may have caused damage to the SPR's pipelines and caverns, compromising its ability to meet its energy security mission in the event of a true energy supply interruption. As you know, the SPR consists of subterranean salt caverns filled with oil, and a complex system of wells, pipelines, and pumps that use water and brine to direct the flow of oil to where it is needed. Each drawdown has the potential to degrade the SPR's storage and distribution capabilities as pressurization, corrosion, and consequences of repeated use erode the SPR's physical integrity.

In 2015, Congress required the Department of Energy (DOE) to conduct a long-term strategic review of the SPR and authorized an investment of \$1.4 billion to conduct an SPR modernization program. We were disappointed to learn that the modernization program, known as Life Extension II, was recently put on hold by DOE, resulting in critical delays and cost overruns.

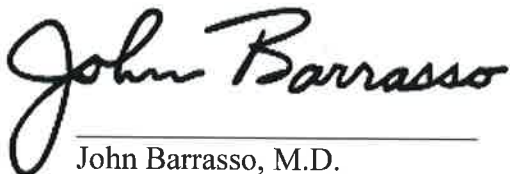
President Biden's unprecedented and unwarranted drawdowns, and the Administration's overt crusade against the oil and gas industry, undermines the country's energy security and, by extension, its national security. Your continued mismanagement of the SPR will leave our nation even more susceptible to true energy supply disruptions and leave us vulnerable to our greatest geopolitical adversaries.

We ask that you answer the following questions, and provide the requested documentation below, no later than December 12, 2022.

1. Has the Biden administration conducted a full assessment of the integrity of SPR facilities to include both current use and future need?
2. Please describe all damage and increased maintenance requirements, including well remediation, cavern closure, and both pipeline and pump replacements, that has occurred as a result of the drawdown.
3. Have any SPR caverns collapsed or been closed temporarily or permanently as a result of the recent drawdowns? Does the Biden administration intend to close down any caverns or sites as a result of the SPR's depletion? If so, which ones and over what time period?
4. What is the current status of Life Extension II? Is it behind schedule? Specifically, has its completion fallen further behind schedule as a result of the SPR's recent drawdowns?
5. If the Biden administration does refill the SPR, will the construction of new caverns and other infrastructure be required?
6. In the event SPR refills commence, will an equal volume of oil be bought that was sold?
7. Has the SPR faced physical or cyber security threats to any of its facilities? If so, please describe to include dates when the incidents occurred and the resolution. Additionally, please list all local, state, and federal partner agencies who assisted in mitigation efforts.
8. Please provide all Department correspondence to include studies and assessments pertaining to the SPR's structural integrity as related to President Biden's SPR drawdowns.
9. Please provide all Department records related to future SPR cavern development and acquisition.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



John Barrasso, M.D.
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and
Commerce